

ON THE
GOODNESS
OF THE
SUPREME BEING.
A
POETICAL ESSAY.

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By CHRISTOPHER SMART, M.A.
Of Pembroke Hall in the University of Cambridge.

THE SECOND EDITION.

CAMBRIDGE,
Printed by J. BENTHAM Printer to the UNIVERSITY.
Sold by W. THURLBOURN, and T. MERRILL, Bookfellers in Cambridge;
J. NEWBERY in St. Paul's Church-yard, and T. GARDNER
at Cowley's Head in the Strand, London.
M.DCC.LVI.

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1784.

X
TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE
EARL of DARLINGTON,
THIS ESSAY
ON

The Goodness of the Supreme Being,

IS INSCRIBED,

By HIS LORDSHIP'S

most obliged

and obedient Servant

C. SMART.

2

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THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE

EARL OF DARLINGTON

THIS ESSAY



The Goodness of the Supreme Being

IS INSCRIBED

By His Lordship's

most obliged

and obedient servant

C. SMART

A Clause of Mr. SEATON's Will,
Dated Oct. 8. 1738.

I Give my Kislingbury Estate to the University of Cambridge for ever: the Rents of which shall be disposed of yearly by the Vice-Chancellor for the time being, as he the Vice-Chancellor, the Master of Clare-Hall, and the Greek Professor for the time being, or any two of them shall agree. Which three persons aforesaid shall give out a Subject, which Subject shall for the first Year be one or other of the Perfections or Attributes of the Supreme Being, and so the succeeding Years, till the Subject is exhausted; and afterwards the Subject shall be either Death, Judgment, Heaven, Hell, Purity of heart, &c. or whatever else may be judged by the Vice-Chancellor, Master of Clare-Hall, and Greek Professor to be most conducive to the honour of the Supreme Being and recommendation of Virtue. And they shall yearly dispose of the Rent of the above Estate to that Master of Arts, whose Poem on the Subject given shall be best approved by them. Which Poem I ordain to be always in English, and to be printed; the expence of which shall be deducted out of the product of the Estate, and the residue given as a reward for the Composer of the Poem, or Ode, or Copy of Verses.

WE the underwritten, do assign Mr. SEATON's Reward to Mr. C. SMART, M. A. for his Poem on *The Goodness of the Supreme Being*, and direct the said Poem to be printed, according to the tenor of the Will.

Oct. 28. 1755.

H. Thomas Vice-Chancellor.

J. Wilcox Master of Clare-Hall.

A Clause of Mr. SEATON'S Will,

Dated Oct. 8. 1738.

I Give my Kingtonbury Estate to the University of Cambridge for ever: the Rent of which shall be disposed of yearly by the Vice-Chancellor for the time being, as he shall think proper, the Master of Clare-Hall, and the Greek Professor for the time being, or any two of them shall agree. Which three persons aforesaid shall give out a Subject, which Subject shall for the first Year be one or other of the Propositions or Questions of the Supreme Being, and so for the following Years, till the Subject is exhausted; and afterwards the Subject shall be either Death, Judgment, Heaven, Hell, Purgatory, &c. or whatsoever else may be judged by the Vice-Chancellor, Master of Clare-Hall, and Greek Professor to be most conducive to the honour of the Supreme Being and recommendation of Virtue. And they shall yearly dispose of the Rent of the above Estate to that Master of Clare-Hall, who shall give out the Subject, to be by him approved, by them. And the Poem I ordain to be always in English, and to be printed, the expense of which shall be deducted out of the product of the Estate, and the residue given as a reward for the Composition of the Poem, or Libel, or Copy of Verse.

W^h the underwritten, do assign Mr. SEATON'S Reward to Mr. C. SMART, M. A. for his Poem on the Goodness of the Supreme Being, and direct the said Poem to be printed according to the tenor of the Will.

H. Thomas Vice-Chancellor.
J. Wilson Master of Clare-Hall.

ON THE
GOODNESS
OF THE
SUPREME BEING.

ORPHEUS, for *so the Gentiles call'd thy name,
Israel's sweet Psalmist, who alone couldst wake
Th' inanimate to motion; who alone
The joyful hillocks, the applauding rocks,
And floods with musical persuasion drew;
Thou who to hail and snow gav'st voice and sound,
And mad'st the mute melodious! — greater yet
Was thy divinest skill, and rul'd o'er more
Than art and nature; for thy tuneful touch
Drove trembling Satan from the heart of Saul,

* See this conjecture strongly supported by *Delany*, in his *Life of David*.

And

And quell'd the evil Angel : — in this breast
Some portion of thy genuine spirit breathe,
And lift me from myself, each thought impure
Banish; each low idea raise, refine,
Enlarge, and sanctify ; — so shall the muse
Above the stars aspire, and aim to praise
Her God on earth, as he is prais'd in heaven.

Immense Creator! whose all-pow'rful hand
Fram'd universal Being, and whose Eye
Saw like thyself, that all things form'd were good ;
Where shall the tim'rous bard thy praise begin,
Where end the purest sacrifice of song,
And just thanksgiving? — The thought-kindling light,
Thy prime production, darts upon my mind
Its vivifying beams, my heart illumines,
And fills my soul with gratitude and Thee.
Hail to the chearful rays of ruddy morn,
That paint the streaky East, and blithsome rouse
The birds, the cattle, and mankind from rest!
Hail to the freshness of the early breeze,

And

And Iris dancing on the new-fall'n dew!
Without the aid of yonder golden globe
Loft were the garnet's lustre, loft the lilly,
The tulip and auricula's spotted pride;
Loft were the peacock's plumage, to the sight
So pleasing in its pomp and glossy glow.
O thrice-illustrious! were it not for thee
Those pansies, that reclining from the bank,
View thro' th' immaculate, pellucid stream
Their portraiture in the inverted heaven,
Might as well change their triple boast, the white,
The purple, and the gold, that far outvie
The Eastern monarch's garb, ev'n with the dock,
Ev'n with the baneful hemlock's irksome green.
Without thy aid, without thy gladsome beams
The tribes of woodland warblers wou'd remain
Mute on the bending branches, nor recite
The praise of him, who, e'er he form'd their lord,
Their voices tun'd to transport, wing'd their flight,
And bade them call for nurture, and receive;

And lo! they call; the blackbird and the thrush,
The woodlark, and the redbreast jointly call;
He hears and feeds their feather'd families,
He feeds his sweet musicians, — nor neglects
Th' invoking ravens in the greenwood wide;
And tho' their throats coarse rattling hurt the ear,
They mean it all for music, thanks and praise
They mean, and leave ingratitude to man; —
But not to all, — for hark! the organs blow
Their swelling notes round the cathedral's dome,
And grace th' harmonious choir, celestial feast
To pious ears, and medicine of the mind;
The thrilling trebles and the manly base
Join in accordance meet, and with one voice
All to the sacred subject suit their song:
While in each breast sweet melancholy reigns
Angelically pensive, till the joy
Improves and purifies; — the solemn scene
The Sun thro' storied panes surveys with awe,
And bashfully with-holds each bolder beam.

Here,

Here, as her home, from morn to eve frequents
The cherub Gratitude; — behold her Eyes!
With love and gladness weepingly they shed
Extatic smiles; the incense, that her hands
Uprear, is sweeter than the breath of May
Caught from the nectarine's blossom, and her voice
Is more than voice can tell; to him she sings,
To him who feeds, who clothes and who adorns,
Who made and who preserves, whatever dwells
In air, in stedfast earth, or fickle sea.
O He is good, he is immensely good!
Who all things form'd, and form'd them all for man;
Who mark'd the climates, varied every zone,
Dispensing all his blessings for the best
In order and in beauty : — rise, attend,
Attest, and praise, ye quarters of the world!
Bow down, ye elephants, submissive bow
To him, who made the mite; tho' Asia's pride,
Ye carry armies on your tow'r-crown'd backs,
And grace the turban'd tyrants, bow to him

Who is as great, as perfect and as good
In his less-striking wonders, till at length
The eye's at fault and seeks th' assisting glass.
Approach and bring from Araby the blest
The fragrant cassia, frankincense and myrrh,
And meekly kneeling at the altar's foot
Lay all the tributary incense down.
Stoop, fable Africa, with rev'rence stoop,
And from thy brow take off the painted plume;
With golden ingots all thy camels load
T' adorn his temples, hasten with thy spear
Reverted, and thy trusty bow unstrung,
While unpursu'd thy lions roam and roar,
And ruin'd tow'rs, rude rocks and caverns wide
Remurmur to the glorious, furly sound.
And thou, fair Indian, whose immense domain
To counterpoise the Hemisphere extends,
Haste from the West, and with thy fruits and flow'rs,
Thy mines and med'cines, wealthy maid, attend.
More than the plenteousness so fam'd to flow

By fabling bards from Amalthea's horn
Is thine; thine therefore be a portion due
Of thanks and praise: come with thy brilliant crown
And vest of furr; and from thy fragrant lap
Pomegranates and the rich † ananas pour.
But chiefly thou, Europa, seat of grace
And Christian excellence, his goodness own,
Forth from ten thousand temples pour his praise;
Clad in the armour of the living God
Approach, unsheath the spirit's flaming sword;
Faith's shield, Salvation's glory, — compass'd helm
With fortitude assume, and o'er your heart
Fair truth's invulnerable breast-plate spread;
Then join the general chorus of all worlds,
And let the song of charity begin
In strains seraphic, and melodious pray'r.
“ O all-sufficient, all-beneficent,
“ Thou God of Goodness and of glory, hear!
“ Thou, who to lowliest minds dost condescend,

† Annanas the Indian name for Pine-Apples.

- "Assuming passions to enforce thy laws,
"Adopting jealousy to prove thy love :
"Thou, who resign'd humility uphold,
"Ev'n as the florist props the drooping rose,
"But quell tyrannic pride with peerless pow'r,
"Ev'n as the tempest rives the stubborn oak :
"O all-sufficient, all-beneficent,
"Thou God of goodness and of glory, hear!
"Bless all mankind, and bring them in the end
"To heav'n, to immortality, and THEE!

F I N I S.

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